

In the Claims:

Please amend the following claims:

- ✓ In claim 1, line 6, after "whereby", please delete "a" and insert --an unobstructed--.
- ✓ In claim 3, line 4, after "individual", please insert --unobstructed--.
- ✓ In claim 41, line 6, after "whereby", please delete "a" and insert --an unobstructed--.

Please cancel claims 27 -40.

Please add the following new claims:

51. The panel assembly as recited in claim 41, wherein cables are disposed in one of said unobstructed cavities and a plurality of cable ingress or egress pathways are provided by said plurality of horizontal joints.

Sub B. 52. A freestanding panel assembly for a modular office furniture system, the panel assembly comprising:

a rigid frame assembly having a top portion and a bottom portion, the rigid frame assembly further comprised of:

- i) a plurality of vertical supports having opposing sides; and
 - ii) a pair of bottom facing panels, one each of said bottom facing panels attached to the bottom portion on each of said opposing sides whereby a box beam structure is fabricated to form the rigid frame assembly;
- a plurality of facing panels;

means for individually mounting each of said plurality of facing panels to the rigid frame assembly such that a plurality of unobstructed cavities are formed between the rigid frame assembly and each of said plurality of facing panels; and

a crown member attached to the top portion of the rigid frame assembly.

53. The freestanding panel assembly as recited in claim 52, wherein each of said plurality of facing panels includes an outward facing front side and an inward facing mounting side, a top portion and a bottom portion, and said means for individually mounting each of said plurality of facing panels comprises a first panel mounting clip attached to the top portion of the mounting side and a second panel mounting clip attached to the bottom portion of the mounting side.

54. The freestanding panel assembly as recited in claim 53, wherein a plurality of individual facing panel members are mounted between the crown member and said bottom facing panels such that a first horizontal joint exists between one of said individual facing panel members and one of said bottom facing panels and a second horizontal joint exists between another of said individual facing panel members and the crown member.

55. The freestanding panel assembly as recited in claim 53, wherein the crown member comprises an upper angled clamping surface, a lower angled clamping surface and an inclined mounting surface therebetween such that the lower angled clamping surface is generally spaced apart from the rigid frame assembly, the crown member adapted to engage a mounting